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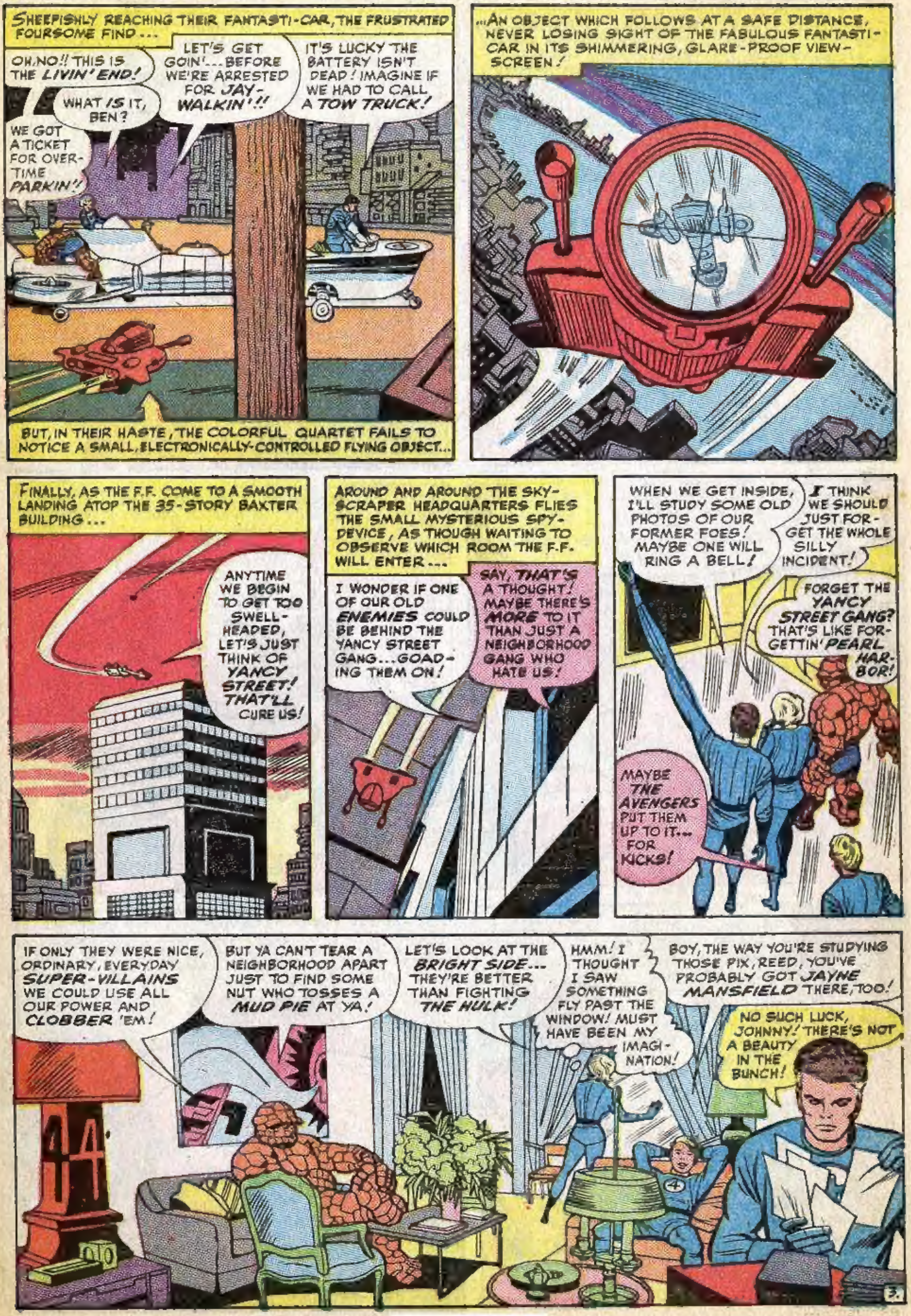

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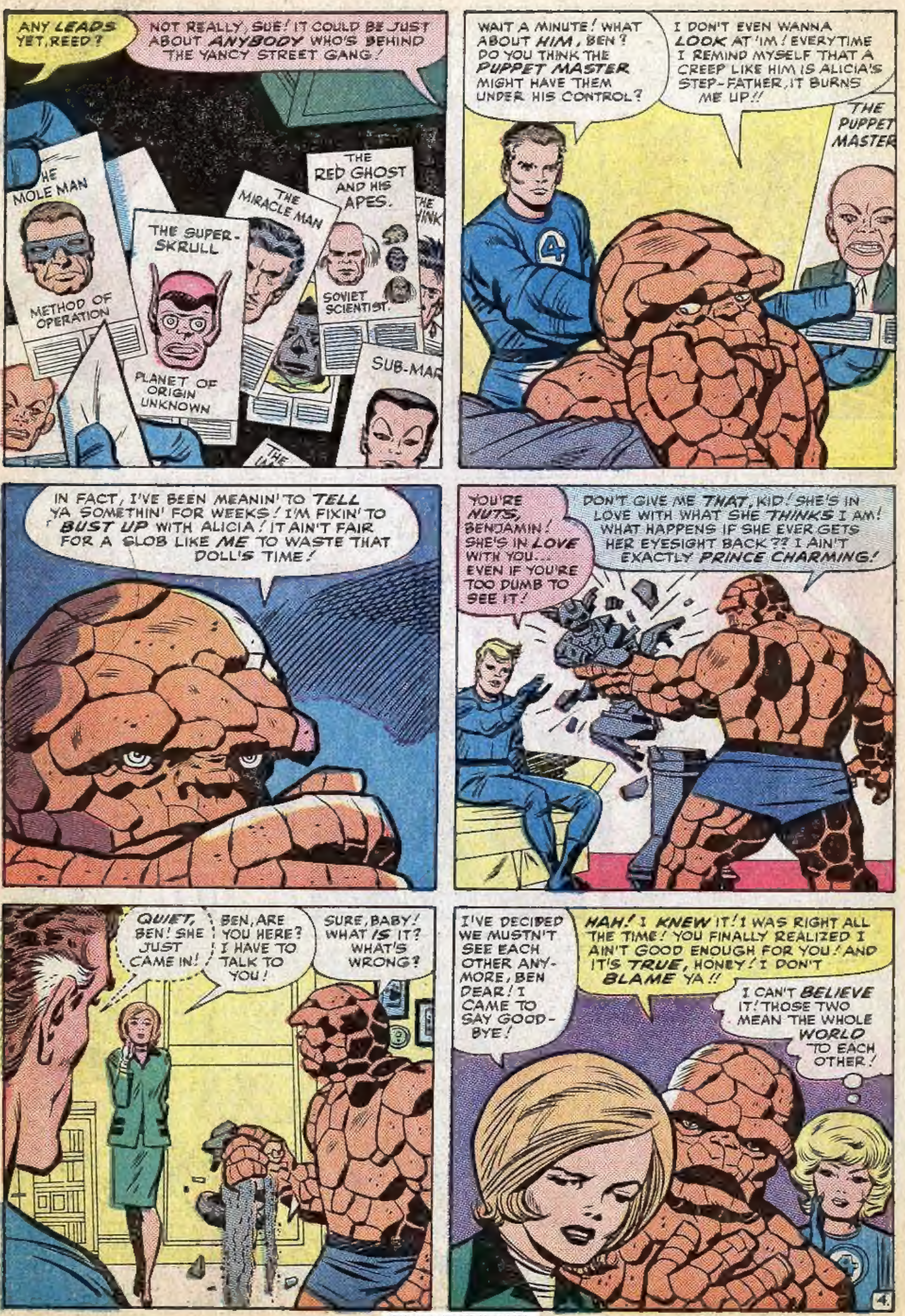

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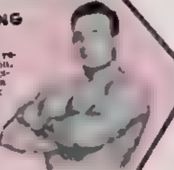

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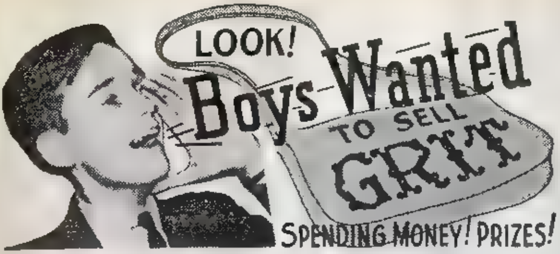

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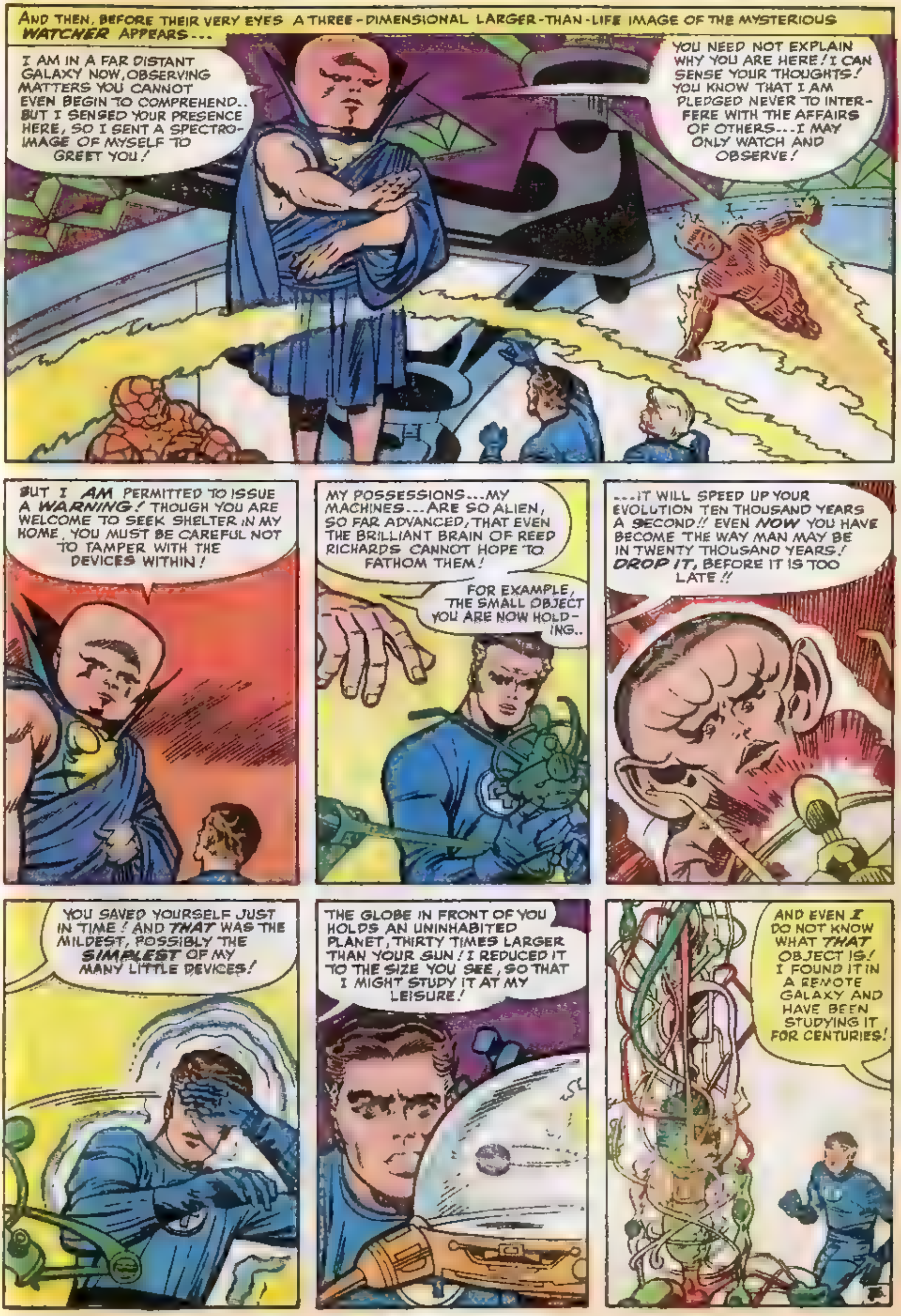

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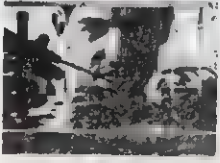

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Address YOUR letters to:
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FANTASTIC FAN PAGE 4

Dear Stan and Jack,

It is not without a certain degree of enthusiasm that I write to congratulate you on the high quality of [illegible]ics. I feel that the Fantastic Four series is the finest example of originality and artistic endeavor in the genre today. Since I am an English major, and English majors are forever drawing up criteria of literary judgment, it might interest you if I spelled out the demands I feel are valid in apprais-ing comics and why I feel that the F.F. excels. First of all, your recognition of the need for motivation for actions is almost unique in the field of comics. Even your villains are psychologically motivated. And the Four themselves—definitely the most totally developed heroes around. As one of my professors pointed out, the best comics have to be followed regularly so that you can recognize the various psychological differences of the characters. Your range of emotional stances, from love to sarcasm to cynicism to patriotism to esprit de corps, is highly commendable and, again, unmatched. Also, there is the matter of plot structure and form. Your plots are highly imaginative and the structure of the action, which varies in its emphasis from the individual to the universal, from action to contemplation, from comic to serious, is rich in interest. The most subtle point is the point of view behind the work itself. Few other comics make any kind of comment on issues at all. Behind the F.F. I see various strains of thought working. For example, though the good guys come out on top, the victory is often the sole result of working together rather than individually—good moral point! Also, you have several things to say about politics, i.e., you're pretty much against Communists. I think that you generally handle it with taste. Now, before your little heads swell up too far, I do have some criticisms. This Reed Richards character is fine but heavens to Matilda, it's a bit too much for him to always be inventing spectro-mass-generative-double-whammy-squigglers at a moment's notice just in the nick of time. Furthermore, these romances just keep hanging on and never lead anywhere. Anyway, I think that in general you gentlemen are doing a fine job and deserve hearty praise. I always like to see someone doing something well, especially something which is usually done poorly. You're a credit to your profession. By the way, you might be interested to know that our fraternity ranks #1 academically on campus—a fact which we attribute largely to continually refreshing our minds with the Fantastic Four and your other literary manifestations. With papers and exams coming up, however, we wonder if it's possible to obtain older F.F. issues as well as the F.F. Annual to complete our collection which some anti-intellectual stole.

Paul M. Crissey, Zeta Psi F.F. Fan Club
Williams College, Williamstown, Mass.

Unfortunately, Paul, our stock of early issues has long since been depleted, although we do have some more recent ones available if you'll let us know specifically which you want. We hope you can complete your collection—we hate to see the anti-intellectuals emerge triumphant!

Dear Stan and Jack,

As far as I can see there's only one thing wrong with the F.F. You don't have anything anywhere in the extra pages about subscriptions. Since I am 23 and a mother of two, I feel rather ridiculous buying comic books at the local stand. But if you force me to — I will!!

Mrs. Susan Bomboy
Baird Apts., 109½ 4th Ave. So.
Lewistown, Montana

Sure we've got subs! We're sending you some info right away. And there's no need to feel redic buying comics — unless you're asking for them in a meat market!

We've received hundreds of letters regarding our occasional use of communists as villains. Here are just a few samples . . .

Dear Stan and Jack,

In F.F. #25 a reader asked if you were trying to start World War III by attacking the Communists all the time in your magazine. You are the only mag that has the guts to do it! The Commies say that they will bury us and he says that you are too anti-Communist. They are our biggest enemies and I am glad to see the Marvel heroes fight them. And so, until I beat the Thing in a wrestling match, I will keep on reading your magazines!

Morris Beer, 1711 Davidson Ave.,
Bronx 53, N. Y.

Dear Stan and Jack,

I love your mag but I think you should quit cutting down the Soviet Socialistic Republic's leaders — in other words, the Reds. I'm backing up Jimmy Edelstein in F.F. [illegible]5. I have read that Mrs. Khrushchev reads U.S. magazines. The Red's magazines cut us down so let's not bring ourselves to their level of propaganda. O.K.!

Jim Gibson, 610 Dexter St.
Santa Rosa, Cal.

Dear Stan and Jack,

I feel that you should defintely continue to pit your heroes against the forces of Communism, which is a much bigger threat to our nation than crime is. Although crime is somewhat organized, its power is limited when compared to that of the Communists under whose domination lives one out of every three persons in the world. There is no way that "...We can have our beliefs and let them have theirs" because one of their principal doctrines is complete world domination. In addition I would like to compliment you on involving Communists in your stories although most other companies do not. One other company, when asked why it did not have its heroes fighting Communism, replied something about not involving itself in politics, etc. I feel that their approach is somewhat cowardly. Communism is not something to be shrugged off so lightly. It is a constant threat to our entire nation and it should be dealt with accordingly. I am glad that at least one company is realistic enough to call our attention to this threat and arouse our interest against it. As I have said before, Communism is undoubtedly the biggest threat to our nation. For these reasons I believe that Marvel should continue to wage the war against Communism.

[illegible]

And there you have it. So far, the proportion is heavily in favor of calling a spade a spade, or a red a red. Thanks to all who wrote, regardless of your position — we're deeply appreciative.

Dear Stan and Jack,

I am a foreign exchange student from France attending New York University. I think your comic books are wonderful and, although many people say I am too old to read such things, I truly enjoy them. I think it would be a great idea to set up an establishment in France or America that would publish your magazines in French. I do not speak, read or write English too well, so it took a great effort to write this fan letter. I love the F.F. Fan Page and the way you reply to your fans. So keep up the good work and remember that all of us here at N.Y.U. are rooting for you!

Francoise Shevall, New York University
New York City [illegible]

Merci, cherie! (Who SAYS we aint ejjicated!)

Dear Stan and Jack,

We are a relatively young Marvel Fan Club and would like to ask a few questions about the F.F. We have noticed

CONTINUED

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that Ben has no teeth—what does he eat?? — Applesauce!!
Ralph Huie, 3463 Lakeside Dr.
Atlanta 26, Ga.

Nah, he can gum a steak with the best of 'em, Ralphy boy!

Dear Stan and Jack,

Many readers have written poems about the F.F. but I have written words to the tune of the Marine Corps Hymn:

From the Halls of Baxter Building
to the farthest land and sea
The F.F. fight for freedom
And for you as well as me!
If the Watcher should look down upon
The Earth's bright, endless floor
He would see the streets are guarded by
The great Fantastic Four!

Lee Christopherson, 510½ E. 3rd St.
Winona, Minn.

How ABOUT that! We finally have a marching song! Thanks a heap, Lee!

Dear Stan and Jack,

First of all I'll tell you what I think are the good features of F.F. #26. 1) About the best feature in the story was the witty Captain America's battling the Hulk and managing to taunt him. 2) Another good feature was the F.F.'s showing their courage after defeat and illness to battle the Hulk. 3) More on the humorous side was Giant-Man's taking a hand and slipping through the Hulk's fingers every time the Hulk grabbed for him. 4) The story itself was terrific — I'll treasure this story always. 5) The art work was marvelous — anybody would have to admit that Jack was at his best! Those were the good points, and now I'll list the bad. 1) The cover read "The Avengers Take Over" — now you couldn't exactly say that they took over, could you? 2) Fighting the Hulk was supposed to be the Thing's fight but he hardly did any of the fighting! 3) When the F.F. met the Avengers they were really messing things up for each other. How is it possible to get in each other's way as much as that! 4) A complaint about the artwork — The Hulk looks too human-like nowadays. Summing up, F.F. #26 was one of the best stories I've ever read!

Keith Greene, 545 Cleveland Ave.
South Bend, Ind.

Wow! We'd hate to hear what you'd have to say if you didn't LIKE the yarn!

Dear Stan and Jack,

After reading your announcement that the Incredible Hulk would appear in the F.F., we suffered through our vacations in eager anticipation for THE issue. However . . . the Incredible Hulk never showed. In his place, rather, there appeared a sorrowful "brand X" who reminded us more of the Jolly Green Giant. Where is the one and only Hulk??! This green Mister Clean is not the Hulk of yore. What troubled us mainly was the art. We have so much respect for Jack Kirby that we cannot believe that he was responsible for the (shudder) change in the Hulk—in every one of his pictures he looks human! We are forced to heap most of the blame for this heresy on the inker and, though it pains us, on Jack. Please bring back that inhuman monster we all love. Quit this humanizing of the Hulk! And now (and this pains us even more) we are forced to blame you, Stan. We regard you as a genius and are willing to let you make a few mistakes. But please, stop fooling around with the Hulk's character. He is beginning to sound like that . . . that . . . *Thor!* The Hulk is the Hulk! Need we say more. Characterization is o.k. but with the old Hulk you undoubtedly reached your pinnacle of Hulkness! Don't get the idea that all we can do is criticize—we could go on heaping praise but we think criticism is more valuable. Thanks for bringing in the MARVEL AGE OF COMICS!

McGill Univ. Marvel Comic Book Society
2059 Jeanne-Mance St., Mont., Que., Can.

A FINE thing! Ol' Hulky has been taking a mail-order self-improvement course for months, and look at the thanks he gets for it!

Dear Stan and Jack,

I can take one continued story but now I wonder if you can complete a story in one issue! As I read F.F. #25 each page got better and better, but at the most exciting part it said ". . . to be continued next issue"! How do you expect me to wait that long? Avengers #4 was better than any other issue, but how come you still have a picture of the Hulk in the upper left corner of the cover?"

John Baca, 328 Garfield Ave.
Socorro, N. Mex.

It's like keeping a candle in the window for him, Johnny! We never know when he'll be back!

Dear Stan and Jack,

My roommate says that the Fantastic Four will never be inducted into the Army because they're "4F"—oh, well.

Steve Perrin, Box 331B, Merced Hall
802 Font Blvd., San Francisco 27, Cal.

So what else is new?

Dear Stan and Jack,

At school we wrote a paper on whether we like comic books or not and our reasons. Although I got an "A" my teacher wrote a note on my paper saying that I should be smart enough to realize that good books are better than comic books. I tried to tell her that comic books are good books, but she insists that they are a waste of money. I would like you to print a comic in which the F.F. meets an educational villain. I would like you to include several educational facts in this comic so that I can show my teacher that comics are at least partly educational.

Billy Robbins, 9 Eastwood Dr.
Denbigh, Va.

Actually, Billy, there's much truth in what your teacher says. While we DO try to inject as much quality writing and fine artwork as possible in our mags, they can never replace "good books," nor are they intended to. Comic mags are like candy—strictly for fun. You still need a balanced diet of classics and other fine literature. Actually, we're darn proud of our readers most of whom are equally as conversant with Saroyan as with Stan Lee—and that's the way we want it.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS SECTION:

—Sometimes things sneak up on you before you know what's happened! For example, we haven't had much time to devote to our fan clubs lately, but the other day we were studying a list of them, and what a surprise we got! Would you believe there are almost TWO HUNDRED local F.F. Fan clubs scattered around the free world?!! This probably makes us the Kiwanis of the magazine business!

—Well, it looks as though we did it! DAREDEVIL shows every indication of being an instant hit. We hoped you'd like him, but we never expected the wild surge of enthusiasm he seems to have generated. But don't worry—we'll keep trying. We're bound to come up with a flop sooner or later.

—Do you like really villainous villains? (What a question! SURE you do!) Then don't miss SPIDER-MAN #15, featuring Kraven the Hunter! Boy, is he a baddie!

—Heard about The Masters of Evil, yet? They're the new arch-foes who teamed up to battle THE AVENGERS in ish #6. Don't miss it, because you'll be seeing lots more of their leader, the mysterious Dr. Zemo!

—And Doc Zemo also appears in the current SGT. FURY (#8) as the chief menace to the happy Howlers! If you wonder how we did it, buy a copy and see!

—Let's do our next item in newsletter style: X-MEN #6 — on sale now — features Sub-Mariner — plus Evil Mutants—highly recommended. Howzat for being brief?

—The next two months are the big ones! Our ANNUALS go on sale! First, in June, we'll present the first SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL, featuring the Sinister Six! Also, a really big surprise—the MARVEL ANNUAL, featuring just about everything you can think of! Then, in July—watch for the leader—the F.F. ANNUAL, starring The Secrets of Doctor Doom! More about them later!

—Just time to tell you that you're in for a real treat next ish! In F.F. #30 you're going to meet Diablo, possibly one of the most exciting villains of the season! So you'd better reserve your copy right away. Thanks for listening! Thanks for reading! Thanks for making this truly The Marvel Age of Comics!

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Some of the people Dorne has helped

Herb Smith was a payroll clerk. Soon after he started studying with us, he landed an art job with a large printing firm. This was four years ago; today he's head artist for the same firm.

John Busketta is another. He was a pipefitter's helper in a big gas company. Today he still works for the same company, but as an artist in the advertising department, with a big increase in pay.

Harriet Kuzniewski was bored with an "ordinary" job before she heard of Albert Dorne. Today she does high-style fashion illustration in New York.

With the right training, Wanda Pickulski gave up her typing job to become fashion artist for a local department store.

John Whitaker of Memphis was an airline clerk two years ago. Recently he won a national cartooning contest and was signed to do a newspaper comic strip.

Long before Albert Dorne started looking for people who like to draw, they came to him for advice and help. Since he alone could only help a few of these people he called together America's most successful artists —men like Norman Rockwell, Jon Whitcomb, Stevan Dohanos and Al Parker.

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